mander is prepared to accept risk in regard to the mission or the unit. For example, the COA may not have a reserve.

If this format is followed in preparing the COA narrative, the narrative can easily be converted to a paragraph 3a of the OPORD.

The commander communicates his vision of the operation through his statement of intent. Each unit commander and his battle staff must clearly understand the intent of the commander two levels up. By our battalion SOP, the division and brigade missions and the commanders' intent statements were posted throughout the tactical decisionmaking process and then briefed when the OPORD was issued. The staff was taught to recognize the four parts of a commander's intent—purpose, method, risk, and end-state—in regard to the disposition of friendly and enemy forces and terrain. The battalion commander's intent was then communicated two levels down the chain of command through the company commanders by the OPORD and during the battalion reduced-force rehearsal, at which the platoon leaders were present.

This baseline battle-focused approach works in training Active Army battalion and brigade battle staffs, and it should also work for Reserve component (RC) units. Our battalion exported this training package to a battalion of our RC partnership unit one summer, where it was used as opportunity training during the battalion's annual training period. They found that it fit in perfectly with the BOLD SHIFT philosophy, and that it gave the staff battle-focused training objectives while their squads conducted situational training exercises.

Clearly, setting aside time in garrison for this battle staff training is difficult, but it can be done if it is given high priority. A baseline approach that includes a foundation in the language of our profession, the IPB, the targeting process, and the tactical decisionmaking process will pay big dividends, both in training and on the battlefield.

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The Use of History
In Professional Development

CAPTAIN STEVEN R. VAN KIRK

The competence of junior officers and noncommissioned officers is a critical factor in the success of an infantry unit in combat. Well-trained, seasoned leaders have often made the difference between defeat and victory.

During the past 20 years, most U.S. Army infantry units have had a cadre of combat veterans who brought to training their practical knowledge and experience. Most of these veterans gained their combat experience in the jungles of Southeast Asia and have now either retired or advanced to positions in which they have limited contact with small-unit leaders. The U.S. combat actions since the Vietnam War have also provided valuable experience to many officers and NCOs, of course, but these actions generally involved only a small percentage of the entire Army and were of limited intensity and duration.

Confronted by this lack of extensive combat experience in their units, small-unit commanders now face a difficult question: How can a commander improve the seasoning and experience of his subordinates, short of actually engaging in combat operations?

The obvious answer to this question is to plan and execute realistic training. But constraints on time and resources frequently limit the duration and the scope of field training exercises. Many units use simulations and map exercises to develop their leaders. Simulations offer tremendous potential for training officers but are not always readily available to units.

Often officer professional development (OPD) or NCO professional development (NCOPD) classes are used as training tools. A solid, well-planned program is one of the easiest and most economical means of improving the competence of these leaders, and integrating military history into an OPD or NCOPD program is essential to this process.

The great battle captains of the United States Army in the past clearly understood the importance of studying military history. Army Chief of Staff General Douglas MacArthur, for example, once said, "More than most professions the military is forced to depend upon intelli-

gent interpretation of the past for signposts charting the future." In short, officers who are serious about their profession have to study military history and attempt to use its lessons to find solutions to today's problems. Integrating historical examples with current doctrine will either reveal why a doctrinal solution is sound or lead to the development of a better solution.

Many unit commanders demand that these classes focus on warfighting skills, and unit mission essential task lists (METLs) provide a good starting point in determining the skills and tasks that should be emphasized in the program. One METL task should provide ample material for a solid OPD or NCOPD class. Establishing a regular schedule of classes, each focusing on a single METL task, will give the program structure and purpose. In the end, this effort will pay bigger dividends than one that simply jumps from one subject to another.

Once a METL-oriented program is adopted, the next task is to prepare individual classes, and this is a good job for the company's lieutenants. They have to research the assigned topic, prepare and rehearse their presentations, and field a series of questions from their peers. In short, each of them must become a subject matter expert. In the process, they not only learn about the assigned topic but also refine their briefing skills. The alternative to this technique is to have the commander prepare and present the class, which gives him a chance to train and develop his subordinates personally. Although both approaches offer advantages and disadvantages, both can be effective.

The Army has prepared numerous manuals that describe the conduct of doctrinally specific operations. Regrettably, though, few junior leaders have read and studied these manuals. For this reason, discussing the way "the book" says a unit should conduct a METL task is a good starting point for a session. The instructor should also link to that METL task the applicable portions of his unit's tactical standing operating procedure (SOP). If the unit does not have a well-established tactical SOP, the resulting discussion will highlight the points the SOP should address.

Many young leaders, after they look at the prescribed way of conducting an operation, often think they have a better way. Sometimes they are right. In many cases, though, their lack of experience may lead them to overlook a key point that may have shaped the development of "the school solution." Fortunately, the numerous real-life combat experiences found in historical accounts of small-unit actions can either validate or refute the doctrinal solution that has been laid out in the first part of a class. It can also increase the junior infantry leaders' level of experience.

Obtaining applicable historical examples to use in analyzing the doctrinal solution does require some effort, but many resources and agencies are available to make this effort easier. For example, the Combat Studies Institute at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, has published the *Leavenworth Papers*. These detailed studies cover a variety of topics ranging from

Soviet operations in World War II to the U.S. intervention in the Dominican Republic in 1965; they often include useful maps.

The Infantry School's interwar collection of combat experiences from World War I, *Infantry in Battle*, was produced while General George C. Marshall was Chief of Infantry, with the intention of giving "the peace-trained officer something of the viewpoint of the veteran." This thought-provoking work covers everything from the technical innovations developed during the Great War to the role of leadership in battle. Originally published by the Infantry Journal Press, this book has been reprinted by the Marine Corps Association (R.R. Bowker, 1982).

During World War II, S.L.A. Marshall developed a technique of interviewing soldiers immediately after a combat action and using these after-action reviews to piece together detailed descriptions of the small-unit action. He published numerous works on actions ranging from World War II through the Vietnam War. Any one of his books could make a major contribution to a unit professional development program.

Historical descriptions of specialized operations such as city fighting are also available. William Craig masterfully describes the Battle of Stalingrad in *Enemy at the Gates: The Battle for Stalingrad* (Readers' Digest Press, 1973). Tony Le Tissier outlines the final European battle of World War II in *The Battle of Berlin 1945* (St. Martin's Press, 1988). Both of these books offer insights into urban operations, something frequently mentioned but rarely emphasized in units.

Several books focus on leadership at the small-unit level. James R. McDonough's *Platoon Leader* (Presidio Press, 1985) relates his experiences as a platoon leader in Vietnam in 1970-1971. In his World War II classic *Company Commander* (Ballantine Books, 1947), Charles B. MacDonald describes the challenges his company faced as it fought its way across Europe from September 1944 until the end of the war in Europe. Erwin Rommel's *Attacks* (Athena Press, 1979) recounts the future Desert Fox's daring World War I exploits as a company and detachment commander. S.L.A. Marshall's *The River and The Gauntlet: Defeat of the Eighth Army by Chinese Communists forces, November 1950, in the Battle of the Chongson River, Korea* (William Morrow & Company, 1953) describes the intervention of the Chinese communist forces in Korea in November 1950. Although Marshall focuses much of his attention at small-unit level, this work also provides an interesting look at division-sized operations—in this case, a series of bad decisions by the senior leaders of the 2d Infantry Division resulting in one-day losses that rendered the division combat ineffective.

Numerous U.S. units, both at home and overseas, might take advantage of the historic battlefields nearby. Many of the actions fought at these sites are well-documented in historical literature. As an example, numerous engagements from the Korean War are described in such books as T.R. Fehrenbach's *This Kind of War: A Study in Unpreparedness* (Macmillan, 1963); and Clay Blair's *The Forgotten War: America in Korea* (Times Books, 1987). Units stationed in Korea can easily integrate these readings into their professional development plans, with the long-range goal of using several classes to lay the groundwork for a staff ride.

In addition, many infantry units have long and colorful regimental histories. The 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment, for example, can easily draw upon the many accounts of its actions during World War II. Some of the more accessible sources are William B. Breuer's *Drop Zone Sicily: Allied Airborne Attack, July 1943* (Presidio Press, 1983); S.L.A. Marshall's *Night Drop: The American Airborne Invasion of Normandy* (Little Brown, 1962); and Gerard Devlin's *Paratrooper: The Saga of U.S. Army and Marine Parachute and Glider Combat Troops During World War II* (St. Martin's Press, 1979).

The reunions that wartime veterans' organizations hold regularly are another possible source of information on regimental combat histories. The men who fought in previous conflicts are often able to provide interesting and informative supplements to the written regimental histories.

Clearly, commanders can integrate historical examples into their professional development programs in many ways. A company level officer professional development session can rely upon a simple discussion of the applicability of the lessons learned from history. A model or sand table can make it easier for them to understand what happened in the historical example. One book that stresses the need to compare "now" with "then" in terms of similarities and differences is *Thinking in Time: The Uses of History for Decision-makers*, by Richard E. Neustadt and Ernest R. May (Collier Macmillan, 1986). The use of this framework will help prevent young officers from drawing faulty conclusions from the past and then applying them to the present.

The final step in this OPD or NCOPD process is to answer a question: Is the book solution for this METL task the most effective way to accomplish the mission? If the answer is *yes*, then the unit SOP and Army doctrine are based upon solid premises. If the answer is *no*, the historical lessons derived from the session should help formulate a better solution to the tactical problem.

Efforts to link history with the present are critical to our leader development. The study of military history not only improves the level of experience in our units, but also injects into our junior leaders a sense of history—a key factor in sustaining professionalism and technical competence during the years between wars.

Since resources and funds will probably be increasingly scarce in the years ahead, the need to study the lessons of the past and apply them to the present will become even more important. Integrating historical lessons into professional development classes is a good first step in promoting this process.

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